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3/31	10:00 am FREE Theater for Change performs "Can We Talk?" at Cheektowaga Sr. Ctr. Pg. 11
May	Older Americans Month - "Aging Well, Living Well"
5/20	Elder Law Fair FREE
5/28	Passport Kickoff Walk Delaware Park
6/9	Disabilities Awareness Day at the Buffalo Zoo pg. 4
6/18	Stay Fit Dining 30th Anniversary Party
9/12	Grandparents Day



Commissioner
Pamela M. Krawczyk

60 PLUS



FREE Seminars Address Legal Issues of Importance to Older Adults

In celebrating May as Older Americans Month, the Erie County Department of Senior Services will host the **Elder Law Fair** on **Thursday, May 20** from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Hearthstone Manor, 333 Dick Road, Depew.

The Elder Law Fair provides older adults, their families, and others with access to reliable, objective information on important legal issues confronting older adults. Experts in elder law from the UB Law School, Legal Services for the Elderly, Inc., and private elder law attorneys will present information free of charge. Seminars include topics such as Grandparents' Rights, Wills and Trusts, Power of Attorney, Paying for Long-Term Care, Medicaid Rules for Long-Term Care, and the new Medicare rules including prescription drug coverage.

(Continued on page 3)

Message From the Commissioner...

Those readers who are fans of the great "one liners" may have heard this one before: "What happens when you get Over the Hill?"

The answer: "You pick up speed."

Well, now you know why I didn't choose a career as a comedian. All joking aside, there is quite a bit of truth spoken in this bit of jest - just ask anyone over the age of 60, many of whom do not let the myths of aging define their lifestyle. Society, on the other hand, appears to have a greater obsession with the negative aspects of aging rather than the positives. In their book, *Successful Aging*, John Rowe, M.D. and Robert Kahn, Ph.D., cite six prevalent myths:

- MYTH #1 To Be Old is To Be Sick
- MYTH #2 You Can't Teach an Old Dog New Tricks
- MYTH #3 The Horse is Out of the Barn
- MYTH #4 The Secret to Successful Aging is to Choose Your Parents Wisely
- MYTH #5 The Lights May Be On, But the Voltage is Low
- MYTH #6 The Elderly Don't Pull Their Own Weight

These myths were the subject of a comprehensive scientific study conducted by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. Their findings dispelled each and every one of the above-mentioned false statements.

The Erie County Department of Senior Services did not need a "study" to tell

(Continued on page 2)



Come again to Cortland, NY **June 8-13**. Open to NY Residents aged 50+, applications are due April 30th. Competitive events include Archery, Basketball, Bowling, Bridge, Cycling, Handball, Horseshoes, Orienteering, Race Walk, Racquetball, Road Race, Shuffleboard, Softball, Swimming, Table Tennis, Tennis, Track & Field Events, Triathlon, and Volleyball. Additional recreational events are available as well. Call (315) 492-9654 or visit www.empirestategames.org/senior for more information. Congratulations to Erie County residents who took part last year, and best of luck to this year's entrants!!

Elderhostel Programs Locally

Center of Renewal at Stella Niagara—
9/19-24 Splendor of Niagara
Call 754-7376 or email
tdeloughry@Center-of-Renewal.org

Watson Homestead Conference and Retreat Center (outside of Corning)
www.watsonhomestead.com or call
607-962-0541.
5/2-7 Hands-on Glassmaking Level One
6/6-11, Finger Lakes Sampler (also 6/20-25, 8/1-6, 9/12-17, 10/3-8)
6/13-18 Dead Sea Scrolls; The Last Russian Czar
7/25-30 Corning's Intergenerational Experiences Over the Centuries
9/26-30 History of American Aviation, Mark Twain, Intro. To Quilting

www.elderhostel.org lists courses around the world or for a catalog, or call 1-877-426-8056 9 am-9 pm. Elderhostel is a not-for-profit organization offering learning adventures for people 55+. Fees/Tuition are required.

Commissioner's Message continued from page 1

us that more and more older adults are "Aging Well, Living Well." Take for example *MYTH #6*. In measuring success, our society simply doesn't count unpaid work...The assumption is that everyone who works for pay is pulling his or her own weight, and those who do not are a burden. Unpaid productive activity is not part of the equation for measuring contributions to society. Yet, everyday thousands of volunteers over the age of 60 provide essential services to organizations throughout Erie County, saving these non-profit groups and taxpayers millions of dollars.

If you speak with Anita Wolniewicz, Program Director for the Employment Division of Supportive Services Corporation, *MYTH #2* is rejected as mature workers exhibit strong mental functions learning new skills and technologies for employment opportunities. Seniors are also embracing computers in unprecedented numbers.

Among other things, it was discovered that elderly people who have experienced some cognitive decline could, with appropriate training, improve sufficiently to overcome approximately twenty years of memory loss.

MYTHS #1, #3, #4 & #5 all deal with the physical declines and illnesses that can come with the aging process. Debilities related to decades of smoking, excessive alcohol use, eating fatty foods and lack of exercise are often simply chalked up to age. A change in lifestyle, regardless of age, will markedly improve one's well-being. A few years ago Erie County changed the name of our "congregate meal program" to "Stay Fit." The reason for this change was the increasing momentum toward the emergence of a more physically and cognitively fit, active, population. The combination of longer life and less illness is adding life to years as well as years to life.

In summary, we are responsible in large part for our own old age. We *can* enhance our mental and physical ability as we grow older – so if you're not already, become a "myth-buster"!

"If I'd known
I was going to live
this long I'd have
taken better care
of myself."

Bob Hope

Walking for Health –Passport to Wellness—FREE Activity for Adults 50+

Friday, May 28 at Delaware Park is the first walk in the Springtime Series. Come for one walk, or come for all—**6/4** at South Park-Botanical Gardens; **6/11** at LaSalle Park; **6/18** at Cazenovia Park; **6/25** at Martin Luther King Park, and **7/2** at Rumsey Woods/Delaware Park Rose Garden.

All Walks begin at 10:00 am on Friday. Registration at 9:30 am.

For more information or to register, contact: The Wellness Institute of Greater Buffalo & WNY, 65 Niagara Square -Room 607, Buffalo, NY 14202
phone # 716-851-4052



This year, *Theatre for Change* will be performing scenes entitled “Can We Talk?” which address the importance of advance planning and how families can reduce the conflicts that often arise over personal issues.

In addition, assistance in completing Health Care Proxy forms will be available. A Health Care Proxy identifies someone you trust to make sure your wishes about medical treatment will be followed should you become unable to make decisions for yourself.

Commissioner of Senior Services Pamela Krawczyk notes “This allows our seniors to receive information on topics important to them — about communicating their wishes and desires, Medicaid, long-term care, wills and estates, guardianship, and so many legal questions. It’s all presented in useful, non-technical, easy-to-understand language from attorneys who specialize in elder law. This is a chance for Erie County’s seniors to receive it for free.”

Space is limited. Please pre-register for the Elder Law Fair by calling Senior Services at 858-8544 between 8:30 am and 4:30 pm weekdays

The Elder Law Fair is co-sponsored by the Network in Aging of WNY; University at Buffalo Law School; Legal Services for the Elderly, Disabled, or Disadvantaged of WNY, Inc.; The Bar Association of Erie County; The State of New York Unified Court System-Eighth Judicial District; The New York State Bar Association Elder Law Section; AARP-New York; and Southwest Airlines. The Elder Law Fair is strictly a “sales free event”. No solicitations or sales products are allowed.

Nominate Someone Who is Aging Well and Living Well....

In May, Senior Services celebrates Older Americans Month. This year’s theme is “Aging Well, Living Well.” This is particularly appropriate for today’s seniors—so many people we know do truly amazing things. Volunteers help keep the community going. Many seniors we meet are active, full of vitality, and totally opposite the old stereotype image of just sitting in a rocking chair watching the world go by. These seniors bring “life” to “living.”

Some achievements by older adults worth noting:

- At 65, Laura Ingalls Wilder published *Little House in the Big Woods*, first of her eight volume series.
- At 68, Lillian Carter, mother of President Jimmy Carter, joined the Peace Corps & served 2 years in India.
- At 89, Doris Haddock, activist also known as “Granny D” walked 3,200 miles across the US to generate support for campaign reform.
- At 91, Hulda Crooks climbed Mount Whitney, the second highest peak in the continental US.

Senior Services wants to know about Erie County’s living examples of “Aging Well, Living Well” and to showcase local senior accomplishments. If you know of someone who has made significant contributions to improve the quality of life in this community, please let us know as soon as possible. Write a description of less than 100 words and mail it to: Senior Services—Aging Well, Living Well, 95 Franklin St.-13th Floor, Buffalo, NY 14202 or email to SeniorInfo@erie.gov. Photos are welcome, but cannot be returned.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Page 4 **Erie County Home—Emphasis on the Last Word**

Erie County has many community-based services to help families do everything possible to keep their aging loved ones living at home in a caring environment. But sometimes families face the decision of having to move mom or dad into a long-term residential facility.

If that time comes, keep in mind that the Erie County Home is a comprehensive, residential health care facility offering a full range of services to provide residents with the care they need and deserve. The fourth largest nursing home in New York State, a 650-member staff provides around-the-clock medical care. Services include skilled nursing care, occupational and physical therapy and rehabilitation, various long-term medical clinics and complete pharmacy services. The Home also has a wide range of recreational and social activities for residents. Residents can get a haircut on-site, shop for personal needs at one of the two stores located at the home, or join an organized shopping trip into the surrounding community of Alden.

A branch of the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library is located on the second floor of the Home, and regular religious services are conducted for all denominations. Like home, a resident's space is *their* space and can be arranged and decorated to individual taste and style. Family members are always welcome to come and visit with residents, and of course, residents are free to go home for visits as well.

If you or someone you know is thinking about moving into a long-term residential facility, please contact the Erie County Home (937-5677) and ask for Robert Illig, Voreen Mattus, or Martin Mackenzie. They will be delighted to provide you with information about the Home's outstanding services or to arrange a time for you and your family to come and visit.

Thursdays are Senior Days at Dunn Tire Park...

All games start at 1:05 pm on Thursdays

May 6 vs. Rochester

May 20 vs. Louisville Reserved Seats
\$6.50 each

June 3 vs. Columbus

June 10 vs. Charlotte Hot Dog/Soda
\$4.25 each

July 22 vs. Richmond

July 29 vs. Toledo

Aug. 12 vs. Pawtucket

Aug. 26 vs. Rochester

Call Mark Gordon at 846-2018 for more info.

Baptist Manor Invites you...

Monday 5/3 Boston Kazoo Band entertains after Stay Fit Dining Lunch at 2:00 pm.

Wednesday, 5/19 the Evans Entertainers and Line Dancers offer some good singing and terrific dancing!

If you'd like to join them, call Baptist Manor at 881-1120 about a week in advance to make your reservation for lunch.

Baptist Manor is located at 276 Linwood Ave., Buffalo 14209 and both these entertainment groups participate in Senior Services' Retired and Senior Volunteer Program.

Join Us for Disabilities Awareness Day at the Buffalo Zoo—June 9

On **Wednesday, June 9**, Erie County Parks Department, Seniors Services, and the Office for the Disabled invites everyone to attend the fun-filled day. There will be \$2.00 admission to the Zoo, and a \$1 hot dog lunch. Entertainment will be provided by T.K.'s Sunglasses at Nite (sound system and karaoke), Terry Buchwald as "Elvis" and Signed With Love, Inc. as well as others. Special thanks to the Buffalo Zoo for providing their great facility for this event and to the volunteers who make this day a huge success. Senior Services will also be issuing the Comp Card at this event, so stop by and say "Hi".

Caregiver - Are you “burning out?”

Take this simple quiz to learn what programs and services may help you.

Check one answer for each question please, and return for scoring to :

Erie County Dept. of Senior Services, Caregiver Resource Center, 95 Franklin St.,
Rm. 1301, Buffalo, NY 14202 or fax to (716) 858-6048.

Results and helpful information will be mailed to you.

Since you began caregiving, how has assisting or having contact with the person for whom you care affected the following aspects of your life? Do you have....	A lot less	A little less	The same	A little more	A lot more
...time to yourself?					
... stress in your relationship with your relative?					
... personal privacy?					
....attempts by you relative to manipulate you?					
time spent in recreational activities?					
... unreasonable requests made of you by your relative					
... tension in your life?					
... vacation activities and trips?					
... nervousness and depression concerning your relationship with your relative?					
... feelings that you are being taken advantage of by your relative?					
... time to do your own work and daily chores?					
... demands made by your relative that are over and above what s/he needs?					
... anxiety about things?					
... time for friends and other relatives?					

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____ Zip _____

Adventures of a Caregiver.... (a series for ideas)

Caregiver Resource Center

My mother has what could be called “good” days and “bad” days. These are apparently characteristic of her illness, a dementia known as Lewy-bodies. On good days, her sense of humor is playful and funny, and she occupies herself with organizing two lives—her own and mine. I can expect to be told to set up a hair appointment for her, to bring her candy, or that she needs something to read. She also reminds me that she has no money—“m-o-n-e-y” and needs some immediately in order to get a taxi or go shopping. It doesn’t register with her that it has been years since she understood numbers well enough to actually pay a bill or handle a transaction. Even on her bright days, she doesn’t know her address or phone number. On her down days, she is sleepy, lethargic, almost catatonic, and has to be pushed and prodded through a day’s most basic activities.

But the up days provide her with some happiness, satisfaction, quality to her life. She feels in charge, and revels in having someone (me) to boss around. I want to please her, and try to arrange to do what she asks. But I know her periods of clarity and high functioning will last only 2 or so days, and a cycle of 4 down days will follow. How to handle her requests when I know she will probably be asleep when it comes time to carry them out? Here is an example—she may be alert and ready to take on the world on a Friday. Her mind focuses on going to church on Sunday. Will I take her? What should she wear?

What time will we go? Can I wash this item of clothing? I revel in her barrage of questions, because she is happy to take control of this small portion of her life, and to have something to anticipate. But I know she will, in all likelihood, be far from any real consciousness in 2 days. I struggle to answer her. Do I tell her she will probably not be able to go anywhere on Sunday? Do I promise to take her? Maybe I can just avoid her questions and switch the subject (highly improbable, given her persistence).

What I have learned is that there is a technique called “therapeutic lying,” which gives me permission and a method to respond to her in a way that will cause all of us less pain. In this instance, I would not tell her she would probably be unable to go to church on Sunday, but instead, respond to her planning. She knows of her own body cycles—that she is often asleep and non-functional (she calls it her narcolepsy), but really can’t incorporate that information into any sense of reality. So when a blunt statement of what will probably occur would hurt her life, I have learned to roll with her desires, and to temper my statements so that she can enjoy the moment she is in. Yes, I would agree to take her to church, and I would wash the outfit she wants to wear, keeping my fingers crossed both in hopes it might happen and for the almost certainty it won’t. This helps keep her joys and desires alive, and what else would anyone want to do?

Caregiver Workshop & Resource Day—April 24th

A special day offering caregivers an opportunity to learn a variety of emotional and hands-on coping skills is scheduled for the Southtowns area. A supervised activity program for adults with Alzheimer's disease or similar problems will be available during the workshops. For more information, please call Lisa Rood at the Caregiver Resource Center at 858-2177, or email caregiver@erie.gov.

NUTRITION PROGRAM

STAY FIT DINING

New Sites Offer More Opportunities for Seniors

Thanks to cooperative efforts between Erie County Department of Senior Services, Erie County Department of Environment and Planning, Jewish Community Center, Jewish Family Services, HMS Consulting, and Meals on Wheels of Buffalo and Erie County, the option of a kosher meal is still available to area seniors. In October, funding from Senior Services enabled the Jewish Community Center to purchase new refrigerators and other necessary items to prepare meals at the Amherst kitchen for the Kosher Congregate Dining program and the Kosher Meals on Wheels program. Roughly 11,000+ home delivered kosher meals and about 13,500 kosher congregate lunches are served per year.

Stay Fit Dining is now available at two new locations: In late January, Stay Fit Dining started serving meals at Seneca Babcock Community Center at 1168 Seneca St. in a previously unserved area of Buffalo. The Center offers seniors the opportunity to enjoy a delicious hot meal in the company of friends and lots of traditional activities: Cards, Wednesday Bingo, fitness program with state of the art equipment, ceramics, computer room, and even occasional trips.

Village of Kenmore Mayor John Beaumont and Legislator Chuck Swanick collaborated with Erie County Senior Services to bring the Stay Fit Dining experience to the Kenmore area. Starting early this year, the Kenmore Community Center at 135 Wilbur near Mang will serve lunch Monday through Friday, thanks to a newly remodeled kitchen. The Center also offers lots of activities in a bright and cheerful setting, with plenty of parking.

All 52 Stay Fit Dining Sites are open to Erie County residents 60 or older and their spouses. A confidential, voluntary contribution of \$2.25 is suggested for lunch, with all monies going directly to provide meals for Erie County's seniors. Reservations may be made directly to a site most convenient for you, or call 858-7639 for more information about Stay Fit Dining.



Ribbon cutting of the new kosher kitchen at Jewish Community Center in Amherst. Kosher meals are available to people of all faiths.

The **8th Annual Hospice Memorial Walk** will be held Sun. May 23, at Erie Basin Marina. The 5K (3.1 mi.) walk-a-thon pays tribute to those no longer with us. Contact the Hospice Foundation at 686-8090 for further information or visit www.hospicebuffalo.com. Last year the Memorial Walk drew 3,000 walkers. Registration starts at 9 am, Walk begins at 11 am, followed by a celebration picnic sponsored by Wegmans.

NUTRITION PROGRAM

STAY FIT DINING

Stay Fit Dining Program Celebrates 30 Years of Serving Erie County's Seniors.

Join us for a celebration on Friday, June 18th in conjunction with the special Fathers' Day meal. Call your neighborhood dining site early to make your reservation, or 858-7639.

Last year alone, Erie County served 1,266,003 meals:
451,629 meals at Stay Fit Dining sites
and served 814,374 home delivered meals.

We look forward to serving our seniors for the next 30 years!

EXERCISE IS FOR EVERYONE

ALL SIZES – ALL AGES.

Visit www.MrFitnessTv.com

Senior Fitness Coordinator Richard Derwald (middle) and members of the Clarence Senior Center exercising with latex resistance bands.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS to see Senior Biographies on Adelphia Ch. 13 CROSSROADS TV Show. Shown at 3:00, 6:30, & 10:30 PM on Tues. April 6th, Tues. May 4th, Tues. June 1st



Advocacy Alert !!

The overwhelming preference of most senior citizens is to maintain their independence for as long as possible. Van transportation, home delivered meals, case management, social adult day services and homemaker/personal care are cost effective services that can help older adults remain in their homes and communities.

Unfortunately, funding for these critical services has not kept pace with inflation and a growing senior population. If you support these important services, contact your New York State Assembly Member or New York State Senator and tell them to increase funding for home and community-based services for senior citizens. Increases in funding for core services under the state-funded Community Services for the Elderly Program (CSE), Expanded In Home Services for the Elderly Program (EISEP) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) will help us meet the growing need for these services. Let your representatives in Albany know how important these programs are for New York's seniors. The Blue Pages in your phone directory can provide you with the names and local phone numbers for your State representatives. Your call can make a difference!

Where can you go for a healthy and well-balanced noontime meal at a reasonable price?

Where can you go to meet new friends, exercise and dance, enhance your computer skills, plan exciting trips, participate in cooking demonstrations, and have some fun? There are 52 Stay Fit Dining Sites in Erie County where people 60 years of age and older enjoy delicious food and a friendly atmosphere. The centers are generally open from Monday through Friday 9 am to 5 pm, with lunch served around noontime. A voluntary, confidential contribution of \$2.25 per meal is suggested. All contributions go directly back to the Nutrition Program to provide more meals and more opportunities for our older residents in Erie County! For more information, call **Stay Fit Dining at 858-7639** or go online at www.erie.gov/depts/seniorservices.

Beginning in June, 2004 and ending December 31, 2005 when the Medicare drug benefit begins, private companies will offer drug discount plans approved by Medicare. You will be able to buy a discount drug card that may save you money on your prescription drugs.

Each card will be different so it will be very hard to choose which card, if any, to buy. You may be better off with the discount card you currently use, or getting your drugs from the Veterans' Administration if you qualify. Almost everyone with Medicare can choose to join. It doesn't matter whether you have Original Medicare (Part A and/or Part B), a Medigap policy, a Medicare managed care plan, or another kind of Medicare health plan. The only people who can't enroll in a Medicare-approved prescription plan are those who have outpatient drug coverage through Medicaid.

Expect your mailbox to be crammed in April and May with solicitations from private companies encouraging you to buy their product—You will need to consider:

Convenience: Can this card be used at a nearby pharmacy? If out of town for a while, can it be used in other places?

Covered drugs: Does the card cover the drugs you need? If it covers some, but not all, perhaps you should speak to your doctor about the possibility of switching medications.

Savings: Does the card offer the best price on the drugs you take? Different cards could base their discounts on different "list" prices.

"Each card will be different so it will be very hard to choose which card, if any, to buy."

WATCH OUT FOR SCAMS—Con artists are already trying to exploit Medicare recipients by trying to sell you a fake card! Beneficiaries should not give anyone their personal identifying information, as Medicare has not yet begun its enrollment, marketing, or outreach process for the prescription drug program. Medicare does not send anyone door-to-door to solicit business, and has not yet awarded any contracts for the prescription drug discount cards. Anyone claiming otherwise at this point in time is a fraud. No cards have been approved yet, and enrollment does not begin until May.

May, 2004: You can start enrolling. There is a \$30 enrollment fee if individual's income is above \$12,569.

June, 2004: Program Starts. Some beneficiaries (income below \$12,569 individual, \$16,862 couple) get a \$600 credit that can be drawn down, but with a 5% - 10% co-pay.

November/December, 2004: You can pick a different card or stay with one you've already chosen. Pay another \$30 enrollment fee.

January, 2005: For low income enrollees, another \$600 is added to value of the card.

December 31, 2005: This Drug Program ends as proposed Medicare changes take effect.

Bill Daniels of the HIICAP program is happy to answer your questions about this legislation and the pending changes to Medicare, or other insurance questions. Call 858-7883 if you have questions.

The **American Red Cross Long Term Care Ombudsman Program** offers training classes on July 12, 13, 14, 19, 20, and 21 from 9 am to 4 pm. Ombudsman volunteers provide advocacy services responsive to complaints and problems of residents living in long-term facilities. If you are over 21, have strong verbal and written communication skills, and are interested in fulfilling the advocate's role, please call 878-2385.

Age in Place – Keep Your Home Safe As You Age

83% of people aged 45+ say they want to live in their current home well into old age. “Aging in Place” refers to the fact that people often **can** stay in their existing homes safely as they age. In November, Senior Services joined with other partners to tour a home featuring many accessible/universally designed features that provide safety and comfort throughout the owners’ life span....a no-step front entry, just a gradual slope – equally desirable for a family with babies in a stroller, or someone using a wheelchair. Electrical outlets are located 18” above the floor, requiring less bending. Bathrooms have grab bars in the tub, shower, and near the toilet, but many people think they’re towel bars. Kitchen and bathroom counters have different heights to accommodate the homeowners’ needs. Most features are so simple and subtle they must be pointed out before you notice them and realize how they affect daily life.

Modifying your existing home can make it safe and comfortable as you age. Simple ideas increase ease of use and improve the safety of a home:

- Extra lighting, especially in bedrooms and bathrooms
- Non-slip floors and non-skid rugs reduce risk of falling
- Doorways can be widened with off-set hinges
- Phone jacks near sleeping or bathing areas
- Adjustable height closet rods
- Raised electrical outlets
- Replace light switches with easy-to-use rocker switches
- Replace fixed showerhead with a hand-held model
- Raised toilets can be easier to use. Recessed tanks can make bathrooms easier to maneuver.
- No-threshold showers with grab bars and built in steps or stools
- Install and secure stairway railings – some models are easier to grasp than others
- Use contrasting colors, particularly at tops and bottoms of stairs
- Purchase smoke detector with strobe lights if hearing impaired



- Vary height of countertops to accommodate people of varying heights/tasks
- Kitchen cabinets with roll-out and pull-out shelving (alleviates need to stretch or bend)
- Replace drawer knobs with U-shaped pulls – easier to grasp
- Lever handles instead of standard round doorknobs are easier to use

It’s estimated that 1/3 of all people 65 and older fall each year, and up to 2/3 of them sustain injury in their own home. Various programs in Erie County may be available to assist low-income or handicapped persons finance modifications needed to make it easier for someone to carry out daily activities, such as bathing, cooking, and climbing stairs, as well as alterations to the physical structure of a home to improve its overall safety and condition. Call Senior Services at 858-8526 for more information about home modifications and safety, and for a complete list of websites with helpful information. Some websites to visit:

www.ap.buffalo.edu/idea - The IDEA Center offers information about universal design

www.ageinplace.org - The National Reverse Mortgage Lenders Association provides information on design ideas, useful products and how to find them, and professionals who can help homeowners plan and implement home modifications

www.reversemortgage.org - Offers extensive information on reverse mortgages and finance options

As the number of seniors grows, so does the need for our vast array of services. The Department of Senior Services encourages and appreciates donations. If you are in a position to do so, please fill out the form below. 100% of your contribution will be used to provide direct service to an older adult in need. **Thank you!!!!**

I designate my donation of \$_____ for:

_____ Newsletter

_____ In-home services

_____ Transportation

_____ **Use where most needed**

_____ Home-delivered meals

_____ Adult day services

Mail to:

Erie County Department of Senior Services
95 Franklin St., Rm. 1329
Buffalo, NY 14202

Please make check payable to:
Erie County Department of Senior Services.
Your check is your receipt.

“Can We Talk?”: Promoting Conversations About Senior Issues

Everyone agrees that family members need to talk about health issues, estate planning, and related matters pertaining to older adults before there is a crisis or someone is unable to communicate his or her wishes. However, more often than not, seniors, partners, and adult children fail to initiate these most important conversations.

Senior Services, in cooperation with Theatre for Change, Inc., will sponsor **FREE** brief scenes addressing the importance of advance planning and how family members can reduce the conflicts that arise over these issues. “Can We Talk?” will be performed at **10:00 am on Wednesday, March 31st** at the **Cheektowaga Senior Center**, 3349 Broadway in Cheektowaga and as part of the **Elder Law Fair** at **9:00 am on Thursday, May 20th** at the **Hearthstone Manor**, 333 Dick Road in Depew. Both performances are **free of charge for seniors and family members** through generous grants from the New York State Office for the Aging and the Moot Foundation. Please call **858-8544** if you wish to attend either performance.

Theatre for Change, Inc. is a local, professional company that uses the power of live theater to address various social issues. Written and directed by Darleen Pickering Hummert, scenes are dynamic and interactive allowing the audience to question and challenge the actors while they remain in character. In the past, this format has been very successful in addressing complex issues such as elder abuse, consumer fraud, diversity, and related social concerns.

The **Alpha Program** (formerly known as Mobile Assistance Program) brings the Department of Senior Services and other service partners to a neighborhood location near you—Case Managers answer questions about programs and services, and the Complimentary Card and 62 Plus Card are issued. Check www.erie.gov/depts/seniorservices for the schedule starting later this Spring, or call 858-8526.

The next issue of *60 Plus* will be late Sept./early Oct. 2004

Go to www.erie.gov/depts/seniorservices to read it on-line
or to find a vendor location listed by zip code, or call us at 858-2117.

Our sincere thanks to all those who make this newsletter available.



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From the County Executive...



County Executive
Joel A. Giambra

Erie County's Fitness Program as part of the Stay Fit Dining Program serves as a catalyst to promote, encourage and motivate the development of physical fitness and sports participation for WNY Seniors of all ages.

As the old adage says, "age is a state of mind." And no one exemplifies that notion better

than Richard Derwald – also known as "Mr. Fitness" – Erie County's Senior Services Fitness Coordinator. Over the years, Richard transformed himself from the classic "90 pound weakling" featured in the old Charles Atlas advertisements into a championship bodybuilder and professional wrestler. And now, more than forty years later, at age 69, Richard continues to carry out my administration's mission of educating and motivating seniors to improve their

quality of life through fitness. Richard has presented hundreds of fitness seminars at senior centers and other locations throughout the County. Last year, over fifteen hundred area seniors enrolled in the County's Fitness Program. Along with the sessions held at senior centers, a number of organizations such as the Retired Teachers Association held seminars for their members.

Additionally, Nutrition Director Susan Radke has presented Richard's fitness seminars in conjunction with the Stay Fit Dining Program, which has helped establish Erie County as a national leader in innovative Senior Services. These sessions are specifically designed as low impact resistance training with an emphasis on cardiovascular health.

If you wish to obtain more information about the County's Senior Fitness Program, please don't hesitate to contact the Erie County Department of Senior Services Stay Fit Dining Program directly at 716-858-7639.